

Guide to Planning Accessible and Inclusive Events

People with disability can face barriers when attending and participating in public events and functions in a variety of ways.

They may experience difficulty hearing what is said, seeing small print on an invitation, climbing steps to enter the venue, understanding signage, using a rest room in the building or locating an accessible facility at the event.

Incorporating simple strategies into the planning phase of an event, whether that be a workshop, consultation, function or concert will help event organisers to create a memorable and inclusive experience.

Planning for Accessible and Inclusive Events

Approximately **20%** or one (1) in five (5) people in Western Australia have one or more types of disability.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021 Census, it was estimated that there were **3,663** people living within the City of Bayswater (or **5.3%** of the City's population) that reported a need for assistance in their day-to-day lives due to disability (ABS 2021).

Event organisers should be aware of legislation that protects the rights of people with disability which includes the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, and in Western Australia, there is a further requirement under the *Disability Services Act 1993* to ensure services, events and premises are accessible.

A person with a disability can be someone who:

- Is deaf or hard of hearing
- Is blind or has vision impairment
- Has an intellectual or learning disability such as ADHD, autism, audio processing disorder
- Has a physical or mobility disability such as paraplegia, quadriplegia, amputation, limb differences
- Has a chronic illness or condition such as arthritis
- Has a temporary disability due to an accident, illness or injury
- Lives with a mental health issue such as depression, schizophrenia, anxiety.

It simply makes good business sense to plan an event with inclusion in mind as it is highly likely people with disability (whether an employee, volunteer, artist/performer, stallholder, agent, contractor, participant or spectator) will be involved at some point in the planning, running or gathering feedback phases.

Inclusive Communication

Planning an event should go beyond the provision of accessible toilets and parking infrastructure and toward demonstrating how your event has embedded welcoming and inclusive practices such as with inclusive communication.

Communicate Using People-First Language

Always start with using people-first language to respectfully speak about an individual with a disability. People-first language emphasises the person first, not the disability. By placing the person first, the disability is no longer the primary, defining characteristic of an individual but one of several aspects of the whole person.

For example, when referring to a person with a disability, refer to the person first by using phrases such as: “a person who uses a wheelchair”, “a person with disability” or “person who has ADHD” instead of “disabled people” or “the blind”. Avoid using deficit language such as: “mentally ill”, “bedbound” or “suffers with...”, as these terms focus on impairment and limitations, often reducing individuals to their diagnosis. Instead, promote inclusive, strength-based language highlighting capabilities and personhood.

Respectful communication means to:

- Treat a person with respect, be patient and listen attentively
- Never make assumptions about what people can do
- Never attempt to speak or finish sentences when talking to a person with disability
- Address a person with disability directly, not their family member, interpreter or support person
- Do not assume assistance is needed
- Accept a person’s right to refuse help using positive body language.

Ensuring that friendly and understanding staff or volunteers are available at event entry points to offer assistance or provide information can make a significant difference. Regular audio announcements and clear, large print directional signage to help people locate accessible facilities and areas for assistance animals is also beneficial.

Accessible Information Tips









Effective, informed planning can help prevent communication difficulties, for example:

- Using clear and concise language
- Using appropriate font style and size
- Providing information in alternative formats
- Providing audio loops
- Booking Auslan (Australian sign language) interpreters
- Captioning videos
- Designing accessible websites
- Displaying information in an accessible location.

Use of Disability Access Symbols

Visual cues and symbols are a great way to promote inclusive and accessible features. Not only do they make people feel welcome, but they can learn more about your event.

The below disability access symbols are universally used in Australia:

| Symbol | Meaning |
|---|---|
|  | International Symbol of Access |
|  | International Symbol of Deafness |
|  | Sign Language Interpreting (Auslan) Symbol |
|  | Wheelchair Accessible Symbol <i>(i.e. venue with accessible entry and ramps)</i> |
|  | Assistive Listening Symbol |
|  | Blind or Low Vision Symbol <i>(i.e. used for a guided tour, tactile tour)</i> |
|  | Audio Description Symbol |
|  | Quiet Space Symbol <i>(i.e. sensory friendly zone)</i> |



Assistance Animal Facilities Symbol



Accessible Toilet Symbol



Parent Room Symbol

(i.e. baby change facilities)



Changing Place Facility Symbol

Planning Accessible and Inclusive Events

When planning an event that is inclusive of all people, event organisers should ask themselves the below questions from the perspective of the target audience:

1. Am I able to get there?

- Drop-off zones, accessible parking bays, and public transport
- Accessible path of travel from transport arrival to the event area
- Useful directional signage
- Automatic or easy-to-open doors
- Well-lit and safe venue
- Enough space for wheelchairs users and companions on walkways.

2. Am I able to participate?

- Continuous path of travel from event area to other areas such as the toilets and food vendors
- Activity area is accessible
- Various seating options
- Accessible activities are offered e.g. Auslan interpreter, captioning
- Audible and visual scoring system for sporting events
- Assistance animals catered for e.g. with water bowls, welcome symbol.

3. Am I able to stay?

- Useful directional signage
- Accessible toilet with clear signage
- Wide walkways and clear space for mobility devices
- Quiet space for those with sensory overload
- Shade and drinking water available
- Changing places facility.

4. Am I able to connect?

- Food, beverage and reception counters are accessible
- Information available in different formats e.g. large print
- People with a diversity of ages, genders, cultural backgrounds and access requirements can use the venue
- The space feels welcoming
- Accessible area with circulation space to socialise.

Checklist for Accessible and Inclusive Events

The below self-checklist is a starting point to guide event organisers to better plan the design and delivery of an accessible and inclusive event:

| Event Organiser | Yes | No | N/A |
|--|-----|----|-----|
| Engage the event team | | | |
| Provide staff and volunteers induction and information to increase awareness on what access and inclusion will look like at the event (e.g. locations of accessible infrastructure such as toilets, parking, thoroughfare, signage). | | | |
| Provide training to staff and volunteers about the use of inclusive communication and how to use assistive equipment if provided, such as portable hearing loops. | | | |
| Provide training to staff and volunteers about correct use of accessible language and terminology. | | | |
| Emphasis on the need for effective communication between event staff and patrons to address access concerns that may arise to ensure they are comfortable dealing with complaints. | | | |
| Ensure the organising team are familiar with accessibility aspects of Emergency Procedures. (e.g. do the procedures take into account people with sensory impairments and mobility impairments). | | | |
| Provide opportunities for people with a disability to assist with staff inductions, training and briefings. | | | |
| Invite feedback from the organising team post-event to learn what accessible and inclusive elements worked and what can be improved. Also seek feedback from attendees to assist with improving future events. | | | |
| Engage the right contractors | | | |
| Check with contractors, performers, presenters, award recipients, VIP's and staff in advance to identify specific requirements prior to organising staging and setting up performance spaces. | | | |
| Plan how information will be conveyed on where to locate accessible facilities (green rooms, accessible toilets, sensory friendly zone, gender neutral toilets, ACROD parking, first aid posts etc.). | | | |
| Invite feedback from contractors post-event on opportunities to improve accessibility at the event. | | | |

| Engage the right food/beverage vendors and stall holders | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| Will there be a range of food and beverages on offer to suit variant dietary needs. | | | |
| Will there be the provision of large print signage at the ground level with good colour contrast or printed menus with large font. | | | |
| Will food service stations or stallholder outlets be at an accessible height and provide sufficient wheelchair circulation space to view food, beverage or merchandise. | | | |

Further Information

There is a wide range of information and tools available online to help event organisers plan and deliver an accessible and inclusive event or function. Refer to the below references:

PWDA Language Guide: A guide to language about disability

People with Disability Australia

<https://pwd.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/PWDA-Language-Guide-v2-2021.pdf>

Guidelines for concerts, events and organised gatherings 2022 – Part B Section 4

WA Department of Health

health.wa.gov.au/~media/Corp/Documents/Health-for/Environmental-health/Public-Events/2022-Event-Guidelines/14293-Events-Guidelines-2022-section-4

Event Accessibility Checklist

The Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO)

afdo.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Checklist-Accessible-Events

Hosting accessible and inclusive in-person meetings and events

Australian Human Rights Commission

humanrights.gov.au/know-your-rights/rights-of-individuals/disability-rights/disability-rights/disability-and-employment/hosting-accessible-inclusive-in-person-meetings-events

Questions

The City of Bayswater is committed to delivering public events that are consistent with the intent of the *Inclusive Bayswater: Access and Inclusion Plan 2025-2030* which can be found on our website: bayswater.wa.gov.au/community/community-services-and-programs/access-and-inclusion/access-and-inclusion-plan.

If you are considering planning a community event within the City of Bayswater, we are here to help, support and guide event organisers through the City's Event Application process. Event Applications are necessary – event organisers are required to comply with the relevant legislation (refer to the list in the City's Event Guidelines).

The City of Bayswater Event Guidelines are available on our website to help guide event organisers through planning an event together with a range of venues that might be suitable, if considering delivering an event within the City.

Contact the City of Bayswater

City of Bayswater

61 Broun Avenue, Morley WA 6062

Phone: (08) 9272 0694

Email: mail@bayswater.wa.gov.au

Website: www.bayswater.wa.gov.au

The National Relay Service (NRS)

The NRS can contact the City of Bayswater on your behalf:

TTY/Voice Calls: 133 677

speak and Listen: 1300 555 727

SMS Relay: 0423 677 767

Website: accesshub.gov.au/about-the-nrs/nrs-call-numbers-and-links

Translating and Interpreting Service

Phone: 131 450

Website: tisonational.gov.au/en/non-English-speakers

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This publication is available in alternative accessible formats such as:

- Large print or standard print
- Easy English
- Electronic word document (compatible with screen readers)
- Electronic PDF.

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